

G. R. S. IX-5]

Previous references.

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Serial Nos.

Later references.

1918.
(~~Open June~~)
P.P.

GENERAL AND REVENUE SECRETARIAT.

Serial Nos. 1

Part B for July 1918

SUBJECT.

Press Communication re forwarding to The Editor
Viswataha for remarks made on the Summary
of the Reports on Indian Constitutional Reforms from
the confidential meeting of the Economic
Conference.

Sample
13.7.18

File No. 136 of 1918.

Serial
No.Pres Communiqué
to G. 940 of 16.7.18

Pres. Communiqué re: Warning
to the Editor, Kanastaka, for
remarks made on the ^{Sept. 10, 1918} ~~in the~~ ^{in the} ~~in the~~
of the ~~Constitutional~~ ^{Sept. 10, 1918} ~~reforms~~
and in the Confidential meeting
of the Economic Conference

Ps.
GENERAL & REVENUE SECRETARIAT
G. S. 1032
1918

No. G. 940
Gm 136-18-1

d. 16.7.18
Number kept in office (2)
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G. 940

Press Communiqué.

The two extracts reproduced below are taken from the issue of the "Karnataka" dated the 13th July 1918:—

(1)

The Mysore Government and Mr. Montagu.—We never knew that among the functions which the Government of a Native State has to take upon itself, one is to act the part of a canvasser of support for measures intended to be adopted by the superior authorities of the Government of India. We were therefore naturally surprised to receive the following requisition from the Chief Secretary to the Government of His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore:—

"SIR.—I am directed to forward to you the accompanying Summary of the Report on the Indian Constitutional Reforms by His Excellency the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for wide publicity being given to it through the medium of your paper." * * * * The Mysore Government's "Summary" fills three closely printed pages of foolscap size, and bears the familiar imprint "GPB" (Government Press, Bangalore), the number of copies struck being 290. We utterly fail to see the considerations which have prompted our Government to incur this needless expenditure of energy and stationery except, of course, the one consideration referred to at the outset. There can be no room for anything brilliant or original in a "Summary;" and by the side of the authoritative summary furnished in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report itself, the industry of our Secretariat precis-writers could not have been anything but a grievous waste of time and talent. * * * * Our Government evidently think that the editor is either indifferent to or incapable of preparing a summary, and have therefore gratuitously placed their own services at his disposal. For the help thus volunteered, the only reward that the editor has in his power to offer is the corrective remark that Government have unwittingly perpetrated a piece of gross impertinence. Let us hope Government will reconsider their action and remember the moral for future guidance. * * * * "We deeply deplore the part which the Mysore Government seem to have consented to play in the affair."

(2)

"With reference to Mr. P. G. D'Souza's letter, which we print elsewhere, demanding a "suitable contradiction" of an unnamed item of information or comment (which exactly it is, is not made clear to us) we have only to state that we are not in the habit of manufacturing "contradictions" or even confirmations in our office. * * * * As to our having commented on the proceedings of a "confidential" meeting, it is surprising that the Secretary should still be unaware of what a hardened criminal this journal is in that line. We have, while commenting, tendered our thanks to those through whom the information "leaked out," and have said that the withholding of information about such "an event of many-sided public interest" would have been a loss to the general public. When President Wilson and Ex-Premier Asquith plead for the transaction of international affairs in broad daylight, we may surely be trusted to stand fast by the masterword of the publicist which is "publicity" particularly when the matter concerned is the inner working of a body like the Economic Conference. We never wanted Government to make the meetings of the Conference *confidential*; and when they do so in spite of us, we are not bound to uphold their course. So, when our consistency brings them trouble, it is not we that should have to shed tears of repentance."

2. In the first of the above cases, Government forwarded copy of a Summary of the Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms to the Editor of the "Karnataka" as well as to other papers, at the request of the Residency, with the object of giving the public an accurate first impression of the salient features of the Report. As

only one copy of the Summary was received, fresh copies were printed in the local Government Press for circulation. It will be seen that the same Summary has appeared in many Indian papers and that the remarks in the *Karnataka* quoted above are based on an entire misapprehension of the facts of the case.

3. The second extract relates to one of the four meetings connected with the Economic Conference which was treated as confidential in accordance with previous practice. This procedure has been found necessary in order to elicit frank expressions of opinion on matters relating to local trade and industry and the working of the Conference organization.

The *Karnataka* has published in the issue of 26th June what purports to be an account of certain proceedings in the confidential session. It is admitted that the paper knew that the proceedings were intended to be confidential. When the Secretary, Economic Conference, brought to notice the impropriety of the course adopted by him, the editor has not only refused to publish a suitable disclaimer but contends that he is justified in getting information in any way he can in a matter which, in his opinion, should not be treated as confidential. It may be stated that, in answer to a communication similar to the one addressed by the same Secretary, a Madras daily newspaper of standing promptly published a contradiction.

4. The editor, having shown a disinclination to respect the confidential character of the communications from Government and made discourteous remarks and misrepresentations utterly unwarranted by the circumstances of these cases, Government are constrained to invite attention, thus openly, to the conduct of the paper.

BANGALORE,
16th July 1918

C. S. BALASUNDARAM IYER,
Chief Secretary to Government.